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King, Horation C.

"Cedar Mountain."





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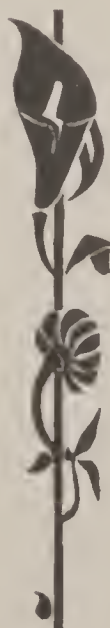








# Cedar Mountain



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*John A. Haffner*  
ARCHITECT & ENGINEER  
Drawn by  
WEST & MAHN PHILA.

MONUMENT TO THE 28<sup>TH</sup> REGT.  
NEW YORK STATE VOLUNTEER INFANTRY  
ERECTED IN THE NATIONAL CEMETERY AT CULPEPER VA  
AUGUST 9. 1902.

ONE of the severest engagements of the Civil War occurred just outside the village of Culpeper, Virginia, on August 9, 1862. Gen. Banks' small corps, numbering not over eight thousand men, had been sent to the front by Gen. Pope, passing part of Gen. McDowell's troops on the way. Sigel's corps was also supposed to be near by. Without reference to the other troops, Banks pushed on, and in front of Cedar Mountain was met by "Stonewall" Jackson and A. P. Hill in force, admittedly with twenty-eight thousand men by Confederate accounts, and against these Banks' little corps was hurled. Hours of the fiercest fighting known in the history of the war ensued, Jackson being driven until reinforced, and then, decimated and out of ammunition, the little band of heroes was driven back, slowly fighting for every inch of ground given.

Every regiment on the fighting line averaged fifty per cent. of loss, several as high as fifty-five and sixty. Among the New York regiments there were the Twenty-eighth and One Hundred and Second, on the right and left of the fighting column and both regiments suffered frightful losses.

On August 8th of this year (1902) the Twenty-eighth New York dedicated a monument at Culpeper, in memory of its noble dead of this sanguinary field, fifty-seven in number, and held impressive services. Gen. Horatio C. King, of this city, was the poet of the occasion, and in simple dialect form tells the grandfather's story of the fight.

His poem, "Cedar Mountain," was read at the dedication of the monument.—Col. Lewis R. Stegman, in *Brooklyn Standard-Union*.



[To C. W. Boyce, 28th N. Y. V.]

# Cedar Mountain

BY

HORATIO E. KING

---

Come here, my boy; sit down upon my knee;  
How old are you? You say you're twelve and three?  
Why bless my heart, how fast the time does fly!  
It seems less years than that since crippled I,  
A gawky, stripling lad, no taller than you be,  
Shouldered my trusty gun and fought for liberty.  
Just see me now with my old wrinkled head,  
Near bald as that round ragged ball of lead  
The surgeon dug from this poor limping leg  
(Though stiffened, better than a wooden peg)  
In old Virginia, on that August day  
When Stonewall Jackson brought our boys to bay  
At Cedar Run. Ah me! who could forget  
That bloody fight! Its memories haunt me yet.

I guess you've heard. No? Well, I declare!  
And you're fifteen? Say, tell me when and where  
You've been to school, and who, my boy, 's your teacher?  
I can't believe there lives a single creature  
Who hasn't heard of Slaughter's famous Mountain:  
Perhaps he doesn't drink straight from the fountain  
Of real history—not the prediluvian kind  
Of Rome and Greece; why, boy, he must be blind  
To skip what's done and doing here at home  
And waste his time on ancient Greece and Rome.  
I've seen of more than forty years the flight  
Since first through Shenandoah's valley bright  
We marched in old Virginia, noble State,  
But then embittered with unreas'ning hate.



HORATIO C. KING.





And just because we loved our brethren so  
We wouldn't let them from the Union go.  
And so put on our uniforms of blue  
And tramped that sacred soil just through and through.  
'Twas mighty rough, but then you ought to know  
That war is hell; Pap Sherman told us so.

And yet I hear some foolish people say  
That war's not war; and that the proper way  
To fight those devils in the Philippines  
Is just to feed them Bibles, junk and greens,  
To send them flags of truce and tracts galore,  
And while they fight to send them more and more—  
And if those fiends go in for nameless slaughter,  
To shoot them down with squirts and vi'let water.  
What ballyrot! If I could only see  
Those valiant jays in Congress and without  
I'd give them facts to jog their thoughts about,  
And you can bet I'm not afraid to speak and tell  
The President to give those fellows hell.  
Excuse my swearing, but you see when I  
Just hear our boys abused, I'd rather die  
Than shut my mouth. Why, bless your heart,  
My boy is there and doing well his part  
In fighting nobly for our glorious flag;  
He'll do his duty while his tongue can wag;  
And when I hear men call him what he's not,  
I don't deny it makes me piping hot!

When I was just a little older than you be  
I joined the Twenty-eighth in Lockport; see!  
As fine a lot of boys as ever fired a gun,  
And quite as fond of fighting as of fun.  
The ladies, bless their hearts! of Lockport town  
Lent willing hands and did us royal brown,  
Presenting us with colors just as fine  
As ever fanned the air. No golden mine  
Could buy that flag when we left home and all,  
And marched away to heed our country's call.  
We had our ups and downs like other boys,  
And many troubles, though a share of joys;  
Thro' dust and mud, in rain and sleet and snow,  
We went, no kicking, where we had to go;  
Until in August, eighteen sixty-two,

We pitched our camp, a lovely sight to view,  
Among Culpeper's green and shady hills,  
And filled our canteens from its sparkling rills.  
The tents all shone like silver in the sun;  
The stacks of muskets and each frowning gun  
Stood ready, for a mile or two away  
Was Stonewall Jackson, waiting for the fray.

Our flag, ah me! it never looked so bright  
As on that summer morning in the growing light  
When we fell in, and felt it in our bones  
That bloody work was coming, and the stones  
On Cedar Mountain would be wet with gore  
And hundreds sleep the sleep of nevermore.  
We asked no questions, all we soldiers knew  
Was Banks was there to tell us what to do.  
And wherefore wasn't ours to think or ask,  
But just to buckle to the awful task  
Of fighting thrice our number (that's no lie);  
'Twas ours, in face of all, to do and die.

'Twas almost noon. We heard our Colonel shout,  
"Charge, old Twenty-eighth! drive the Johnnies out!"  
A ringing cheer rang all along the line,  
And with a rush that stiffened every spine  
We sent the Johnnies flying like the wind  
And left their dead and wounded far behind.  
Our gallant Colonel, Dudley Donnelly, fell,  
And bleeding died there in that mouth of hell;  
And Lewis, too, who bore our flag that day,  
Fell on the field, and while he wounded lay,  
Brave hands to rescue, held the banner high  
Till every one was stricken down to die;  
Our Lieutenant-Colonel Brown, God bless him! he  
There lost his arm—a-fighting for the free.  
He's here; but Sprout, our Adjutant, was shot,  
And breathed his last upon that fearful spot.

The rank and file went in three hundred strong,  
And more—I guess you've heard that famous song  
Of Balaklava, and old England's braves  
Whom blundering orders sent to heroes' graves?  
Well, Balaklava was like children's play,  
And wasn't in it with the desperate way

The Twenty-eighth went down like soldier toys,  
And lost two hundred of its noble boys.  
The fight was worse than useless. Who's to blame?  
Don't ask. No good! We won a glorious name,  
But not the field; we lost, and worst of all  
Our cherished flag; the Johnnies had the call.

Like sheep they packed us in the cattle cars,  
Till Libby found us penned behind its bars,  
With one small piece of our shot-riddled flag,  
A precious, frayed-out little bit of rag,  
But full of cheer day after weary day,  
While pain and hunger wore our lives away.  
But wars, like all things else, must have an end,  
Though still for three years more 'twas fight and spend,  
And blood and money flowed in streams away,  
Until upon that fateful April day,  
At Appomattox, Southern flags were furled,  
And peace, our peace, was hailed throughout the world.  
We boys had had enough of fights and gore,  
And glad were we to see our homes once more.  
We saved the Union; not a silver star  
Was blotted from the flag; no single scar  
Defaced the stripes of lovely red and white;  
But Stars and Stripes reflected freedom's light.  
Our angry foe became our loyal friend,  
Till in another war we both contend  
To see who'll fight the hardest for the land  
Whose life was threatened once by brothers' hand.

Well, twenty years went by, and not a sign  
Of our old flag except that six by nine,  
That little strip preserved by Colonel Brown  
When we were captives in old Richmond town,  
Till eighty-two, perhaps 'twas eighty-one,  
He spent a happy day in Washington,  
When searching in the pile, with eager air,  
Of captured flags, he found it lying there.  
He dragged it from its dusty hiding place,  
Our flag once lost, but lost not in disgrace.  
He matched the missing fragment to a tee,  
And you may well believe when told to me  
I cried for joy, I threw my cap on high,  
And cheered until I thought I'd surely die!



But that's not all; we'll not forget the day  
When those brave men who took that flag away—  
The Fifth Virginia—traveled North to give  
It back; I'll not forget it while I live.

We have it yet; and when my time shall come  
'To shuffle off this coil and go up home,  
I hope my comrades who may linger here  
Will lay that tattered flag upon my bier;  
And when the preacher's had his final say,  
I want some comrade who was there that day  
At Cedar Mountain just to read this song  
I've writ below; and let him read it strong!  
Then bugle sound "Lights out"; perhaps I may  
Just hear; for heaven can't be far away.

---

#### TO THE AMERICAN FLAG.

All hail our starry banner,  
The emblem of the free,  
Whose Stars and Stripes forever  
Shall stand for liberty.  
The world beholds thy glory,  
Bright banner of the stars,  
And nations held in bondage  
Shall break their prison bars.

In thee the blue of heaven  
Proclaims thy purity,  
And peoples plunged in sorrow  
Shall fondly turn to thee.  
To lead the world in honor,  
The weak to cheer and save,  
These are thy tasks forever,  
Dear banner of the brave.

To thee our holy pledges  
We solemnly renew  
Until our hearts are silent,  
To thee will we be true.  
The centuries shall claim thee  
Till time itself shall end,  
And all the world proclaim thee  
Protector, saviour, friend.















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